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SUBJECT: TURKISH CONTRIBUTION TO LEBANON RECONSTRUCTION

REF: BEIRUT 3233

1. (SBU) Turkish MFA Lebanon Assistance Coordinator Koray Targay explained October 5 that Turkey planned to provide its \$10 million Stockholm pledge in the form of 50 pre-fabricated schools that would be set-up in southern Lebanon. He coordinated this with Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) officials in Beirut during the week of September 25. CDR officials will identify the specific sites for the schools, and Turkish companies will complete the construction, although they may require help from CDR in laying the foundations. Targay said that the GOT had 35 of the 50 units on hand in Istanbul. These will be trucked to Lebanon and could be set-up and ready for use within one month. He explained that these are substantial structures with an expected life of at least 20 years. Everything needed for a school, including air conditioning and "up to the chalk," is included.

2. (SBU) Targay was skeptical about the planned Beirut donors conference. He said that he detected no political will in Beirut to undertake the serious economic reforms that would be required to absorb large amounts of new assistance. He recalled that the \$4.4 billion pledged at the Paris II conference in 2002 was still untapped. Nonetheless, he said Turkey was prepared to make a pledge of up to \$20 million, bringing the total Turkish government contribution to \$30 million. He said Turkish NGOs, including the Turkish Red Crescent, had provided about \$15 million of humanitarian and medical assistance (dialysis machines), but that these programs were winding down. Turkish forces contributed to UNIFIL will also assist in road-building and will open a medical clinic once they are established in the south.

3. (SBU) The schoolhouse donation was complicated by a promise made in a phone call between PM Erdogan and PM Siniora that Turkey would send 750 emergency housing units to Lebanon. On further investigation, Turkish officials had found that not only were only 424 such units on hand (left over from the 1999 earthquakes), but that they were in very bad shape. Furthermore, these are 20-foot shipping containers that are not appropriate to the needs of large rural families. He is trying to convince the Prime Minister's staff that the school buildings are a more useful contribution than the shipping containers. Targay said his assessment is also that building permanent housing is more appropriate than using temporary structures.

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